

Mr. Speaker, you are telling me, this report tells me that the Border Patrol can stop 2 pounds of pork in a diaper from entering this country, but we can't stop \$58 billion worth of illegal drugs and half a million illegals crossing the border each year?

This is crazy. We must fix this problem before people start smuggling themselves in diapers.

#### ENERGY POLICY IN AMERICA

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in opposition to America's energy policy, which takes from the working class Americans and rewards rich oil companies. Under President Bush's plan more than \$20 billion has been waived in royalty fees and more than \$5 billion in giveaways to big oil-producing corporations.

Legislation considered by this body last week targeted our States and our communities as the culprits of high gas prices, rather than pointing a finger at oil companies who made more than \$110 billion in profits in 2005 and \$16 billion in the first 3 months of 2006.

But we know better. Just yesterday, the Environmental Council of States stated that they were not aware of any credible report that our States are denying or lagging behind on permitting of new refineries and the expansion of existing refineries. Documentation to the contrary has not been presented to our committee, Energy and Commerce Committee.

Rather than take on wealthy oil company executives, this administration and this body continue to delay real action to help working class families and small businesses.

I hope that we can resolve this issue soon.

#### MEDICARE ENROLLMENT

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on December 8, 2003, President Bush signed the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act of 2003 into law. While I may have a few differences with certain aspects of this legislation, we have come a long way since the bill first became law.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have made great strides to make this implementation process as painless as possible. The first enrollment period for Medicare part D will end in just 5 days.

Over 27 million seniors across America now have coverage and are saving money on their prescription drugs. Currently, the State of South Carolina has over 438,000 people with prescription drug coverage. Almost 80,000 of those seniors are living in my district.

As the enrollment deadline of May 15 nears, I urge my constituents to call 1-

800-MEDICARE with any questions. It is important to take an active roll in managing your own health care.

#### CONGRESS SHOULD EXTEND THE MAY 15 DEADLINE ON THE MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PLAN

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the pharmaceutical industry influenced the passage of a Medicare prescription drug plan last year. It is not great, it is just all we got. The deadline is May 15 for seniors to enroll in this program.

If seniors are not enrolled in 5 days, they will face a financial penalty each month for the rest of their lives. Since it took effect at the beginning of this year, the logical problems of implementing this plan have proved enormous. Seniors across the Nation have complained about the confusing number of plans to choose from and the change in prescription benefits each offers.

Research has shown that many of those who contact the Federal Government for help receive incorrect information or no information at all. It is no surprise then that millions of seniors have yet to select a drug plan.

Now with only 5 days to select the right plan or face a steep penalty, these seniors find themselves under pressure to make the best decision for their health and their pocketbook.

Mr. Speaker, serious health decisions require time and information. Our seniors deserve more.

#### MEDICARE PART D

(Ms. HART asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call for a stop to the misleading and dishonest rhetoric from some political circles that has been used to purposefully scare seniors regarding the new prescription drug program that is available through Medicare. These hollow claims that it is too expensive for seniors or doesn't provide good coverage have been repeated by groups across the country.

These couldn't be farther from the truth. By every true measure, the new program is succeeding in its core mission of helping Medicare patients save money on their prescription drugs. Participation in the program has now exceeded its goal of enrolling 30 million by the conclusion of the first year, and it is only May.

In addition, since the beginning of March of this year, seniors have been enrolling in the prescription drug plan at the average rate of 416,000 seniors per week.

The overwhelming reason that so many Medicare recipients have now enrolled is simple. They are seeing real savings on the cost of their prescrip-

tion drugs. The average senior who signs up for a plan will save more than \$1,100 on their prescription drugs this year and low income seniors projected to save about \$3,700; the average premium, only \$25. Some in my State are paying just over \$10.

Mr. Speaker, with so little time left to enroll, I encourage my colleagues help seniors enroll, not scare them.

#### FIVE DAYS FOR REPUBLICANS TO REJECT BUSH PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAX ON SENIORS

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, we must stand up for America's seniors. As this calendar shows, House Republicans have less than 1 week, only 5 days left to join Democrats in extending the period seniors have to sign up for private prescription drug plans. If this Congress refuses to act, millions of American seniors who have yet to choose a plan will be penalized with the Bush prescription drug tax that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. The Bush administration is trying to force American seniors to make a decision that will impact both their checkbooks and their health in the next 5 days.

Five million seniors have still not chosen a drug plan. But the Bush administration wants to scare all of these seniors into choosing a plan before May 15, regardless of whether or not they are comfortable or ready to sign up for a plan.

Mr. Speaker, it is time House Republicans declare independence from the White House. As we mark off another day, House Republicans must join us in taking action this week.

#### THE DEMOCRATS TRIED ON MEDICARE

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, you can't say the Democrats haven't tried their hardest. When it comes to the Medicare prescription drug benefit, they have complained, criticized and have held town hall meetings to encourage seniors not to sign up. Luckily for America's seniors, they have decided to listen to the facts instead of the negative spin.

Recently the Department of Health and Human Services reported that more than 30 million Medicare beneficiaries are now getting coverage and saving money on their prescription drugs. This surpasses their expectations of 28 to 30 million enrollees in the first year. I suppose adding to the Democrats' frustration are recent polls showing broad support for the new benefit, as well as amazing success stories of seniors who are now reaping big savings in their prescription drug costs.